

If you've ever been to a winery for a tour, you already have a general understanding of how CBD oil is made. Although the industry lingo and manufacturing processes are different, the concept is very similar, with one significant difference: In the wine industry, more often than not, the vineyard where the grapes are grown is on the same property as the barrels in which fermentation and aging take place. This isn't the case with hemp. Prior to the passage of the [Farm Bill in 2018](#), the majority of hemp was grown in China. Today, hemp is grown in 46 of 50 states, with growers selling to thousands of manufacturers of CBD extracts around the country. While it may feel like you need to be an expert in the cultivation of hemp and manufacturing best practices to know how to avoid poor-quality CBD oil, fortunately for you, the consumer, there's an industry standard test to give you the confidence you need to be sure you're buying the best quality CBD oil. And while there is a standard to ensure consumers' safety, only reputable manufacturers use this industry test. Before we talk about what these tests reveal, it's important to talk about why your CBD oil goes through such rigorous testing.

## **First of All, What is Hemp?**

While this may seem like a question with an obvious answer, it's not really. For one thing, although the common belief is that hemp and cannabis are different plants, they're not. Industrial hemp is cannabis but without the psychoactive effect of tetrahydrocannabinol (more commonly known as THC). In order for CBD oil [manufacturers](#) to sell CBD oil without having to comply with the same rules and regulations as cannabis growers manufacturers and dispensaries, CBD oil must contain no more than 0.3 percent THC. And while the absence or presence of THC has no effect on the quality of your CBD extracts, it is an important distinction the federal government, state and local [governments make](#). For the manufacturers and consumers of CBD oil, this is also a big distinction because it means you are allowed to purchase CBD oil over the Internet and have it shipped to your home via the U.S. Postal Service. For consumers who want many of the benefits of the plant without the high associated with cannabis, CBD oil is the perfect solution.

## **Hemp: Its Profile and How It's Grown**

Like grapes for wine, hemp plants contain a DNA profile. During the cultivation stage, hemp farmers monitor the plant frequently to ensure it maintains the desired DNA profile needed to sell to manufacturers. After the plant is mature enough to harvest, dried and ready to ship to manufacturers of CBD extracts, the grower makes claims based on their internal testing, that it has maintained its profile throughout the growth cycle. Equally important to the genetics of the plant is the manner in which hemp is grown.

While organic practices are desired and should be the standard in the industry, according to U.S. government guidelines, [hemp doesn't meet the threshold to force growers to use organic growing](#)

[best practices](#). For CBD manufacturers who want to cut corners, they'll buy hemp that was grown with the use of chemical fertilizers (which introduce heavy metals to the soil to replenish what these same fertilizers remove), pesticides ([which contain neurotoxins](#)) and herbicide, i.e. RoundUp, which contains [Glyphosate, known to cause cancer](#).

Once the hemp is grown, harvested and dried, it is then shipped to manufacturers who will go through the process of extracting the oil from the plant to create CBD extracts. One way to avoid poor-quality CBD oil is to look at their method of extraction. The goal for reputable CBD oil manufacturers is to preserve that profile during extraction from the plant and to do so safely. The process that is safest on the environment and for your body is using the [CO2 extraction method](#). Using pressured carbon dioxide, it avoids the use of toxic chemicals, which counter any benefits you would otherwise receive from your CBD oil. Additionally, there is zero impact on the environment.

## **Fillers and Additives: Some are Ineffective and Some Can Be Deadly**

In addition to the cost of growing hemp using organic practices, the process of extracting the oil from the plant is expensive, especially if done using the CO2 method. For this reason, many disreputable CBD oil manufacturers will use fillers, such as anything from olive oil on the somewhat safe side to harmful chemicals and even synthetic weed ([think K2 and Spice](#)) on the other. Synthetic cannabis is made by taking laboratory-created cannabis and spraying it with noxious chemicals designed to produce hallucinations. It is responsible for many trips to the emergency room, with some of its victims not returning home to tell the tales.

If this sounds like a horror show that couldn't possibly happen when purchasing something that is supposed to complement your already healthy lifestyle, in evaluating the safety and efficacy of many popular CBD oil manufacturers, [Consumer Reports](#) found some were using K2 and Spice in their "secret and proprietary blend." It's inexpensive and, for disreputable companies, it won't show up on rigorous testing because they don't provide such analysis. The good news is that by being diligent, you can quickly learn how to avoid poor-quality CBD oil.

Another way beyond the extraction method is to look at what's in your CBD oil. If you see anything other than hemp oil and natural flavoring to improve the taste (hemp is not very pleasing to the palette for many consumers) and the company can't explain why a particular ingredient is beneficial or they are unclear what else is in your CBD oil, this is a company you should avoid. Added ingredients like willow bark and menthol that are natural and easy to pronounce are examples of safe additives.

Examples of harmful ingredients can include:

- Dextromethorphan (DXM), which is a cough suppressant in many OTC cough syrups
- 5F-ADB, which is synthetic cannabis/hemp similar to K2 and Spice
- Formaldehyde and other Carbonyls, which disreputable companies use as thinning agents

## Terpenes and Why They're Important

Getting back to the similarities between wine and CBD oil, if you are up on your tannins, you know how they can alter the profile of the grapes used to make wine. Tannins can also affect the taste of wine, which is desirable to more experienced wine drinkers, and sometimes a turn-off for those new to wine—as wine is considered an acquired taste. Think of terpenes in the same way but for a different reason.

Terpenes are a class of diverse organic compounds produced in hemp. They are responsible for providing the flavor and scent of the plant, as well as complementing our body's [endocannabinoid system](#).

## Tracking Your CBD Oil from Seed to Sale

Because hemp is grown and dried in a different location than where the oil is extracted from the plant to make CBD oil, without following its life cycle from seed to sale, how will you know whether the grower used chemical fertilizer, sprayed pesticides on it or used a chemical weed killer that contains Glyphosate? How do you know whether the seeds used to grow the hemp were genetically modified (GMOs)? How do you know the company selling your CBD oil used the CO2 extraction method instead of introducing chemicals into the hemp for extraction?

Companies make claims all the time about their products and services. Disreputable companies use words and emotion that appeal to consumers, encouraging them to buy their products. The problem is, without following your CBD oil through its life cycle, you can't possibly know, and disreputable companies know this.

To protect your health and your wallet, there is only one sure-fire way you can guarantee your CBD oil is full spectrum and that harmful chemicals weren't introduced during growing, extraction and manufacturing. When you land on the home page of a website that sells CBD oil, before you peruse their products, before you read their "about us" and their testimonials, look to see if the company provides third-party lab testing for their products and, moreover, that they're easy to find and you don't have to go on a wild goose chase to find those results. Reputable companies that sell high-quality CBD oil are proud to show off the [lab results for all of their products](#).

## What Third-Party Tests Reveal

The reason testing performed on your CBD oil by an independent company is so crucial is because they're not affiliated with the manufacturer or the grower. There's no chance the results can be skewed or manipulated to produce outcomes promising a safe product when it really isn't. For this reason, the CBD oil producers that cut corners and add fillers to their products will use gimmicks because they know they lack the testing results to back up their bogus claims.

What you should expect [third-party testing to reveal](#) is the plant's DNA profile, plus the presence (or lack thereof) of:

- Solvents
- Heavy metals
- Pesticides
- Fertilizers
- Herbicides
- coli
- Mold
- Salmonella
- Listeria
- Arsenic
- Lead
- Mercury

## **Falling Prey to Poor-Quality CBD Oil: Other Pitfalls to Avoid**

Once you've confirmed there are no toxic chemicals in your CBD oil, next go through and check out the website's products. The language should be easy to understand and not be over your head. It should be clear what you're buying, whether you have a scientific background or not.

Next, look at the price. As mentioned, there are costs associated with growing hemp using organic practices and using the CO2 extraction method, but it also costs companies to make the formulas and test every batch of CBD extracts using a third-party company. If you notice a price discrepancy between one CBD oil company and another, the lower price is a sign that company is likely using inferior ingredients, cutting corners by sourcing hemp from growers who don't use organic growing methods, who use a chemical to extract the oil from plant or all of the above.

Additionally, look at the reviews and testimonials. [Disreputable companies routinely pay people to provide fake reviews](#) on their products and services. They use testimonials to bolster their sales, hoping visitors will be so taken in by them, they'll overlook the lack of testing on their

products. Look at what's said in these reviews. If they sound too similar, that's often an indication they're paid reviews. If a site is flooded with reviews, it's often the most obvious sign they won't have laboratory testing of their products. Reputable companies will also provide an explanation of health claims about the efficacy of CBD oils.

And lastly, customer service should be easy to contact, with the company offering several options: a phone number, an email, chat and their physical address. If you have to look very hard to contact the company, that's often a dead giveaway. Companies should want you to reach out both pre- and post-sale for questions, concerns or to let them know how happy you are.

CBD oil is a safe and effective way to complement your healthy lifestyle. The last thing you need to worry about is whether there are ingredients present that can be ineffective or even dangerous to consume.